



Senator Feinstein Opposes Gonzales Nomination January 26, 2005

Washington, DC – In a Judiciary Committee meeting today, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) voted against the nomination of Judge Alberto Gonzales to be Attorney General. Following is Senator Feinstein's statement:

"With much regret, I have decided to vote no on the nomination of Alberto Gonzales to be the next Attorney General. I do not believe he has been candid with the Judiciary Committee about his views on torture or its use despite repeated questions about the issue.

A critical question concerns how he will lead the Department of Justice. And by refusing to voice his own values and understanding of the law, he has failed to demonstrate the independent leadership he will need as the nation's chief law enforcement officer.

In his answers to the Committee, Alberto Gonzales obfuscated more than he clarified. Time and time again, he voiced the President's policies instead of his own philosophy, and relied on technical interpretations of the law. I wanted him to show something of his own personal values and judgment, but he did not. He essentially has been a legal enabler to the President and to the same man when he was Governor of Texas in clemency hearings on executions. There is little known about his views on many subjects – immigration, civil rights, and other areas of concern to the Department of Justice.

Instead of taking the hearing as an opportunity to start an open and honest dialogue, he tried to stonewall. Instead of condemning brutal interrogation techniques, like forced nudity and simulated drownings, he wrote to me that he "was not in a position to judge" whether they are "appropriate." I believe confirming this nomination would send the wrong message to the world.

Anyone who watched the nomination hearings got the sense that our law and policy on interrogations is muddled at best. This is why I believe that this Committee should examine laws concerning interrogations, military detainees, and how we conduct ourselves in wartime and will be seeking hearings on the issue."